

**General Assembly**

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Request for the inclusion of an additional item in the agenda of the sixty-fourth session**United Nations University****Letter dated 16 November 2009 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly**

At its fifty-fifth session in December 2008, the Council of the United Nations University (UNU) adopted a proposal for UNU to build upon its existing joint graduate programmes and to develop and implement its own postgraduate degree programmes as part of the UNU strategic plan 2009-2012.

In order for the University to grant advanced academic degrees, a textual amendment to its Charter is required. This must be adopted by the General Assembly.

In accordance with article XII of the UNU Charter, I am writing to request that the General Assembly consider this amendment. Accordingly, pursuant to rule 15 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, I request the inclusion of an additional item entitled "United Nations University" in the agenda of the sixty-fourth session. I also request that the matter be allocated to the Second Committee for its consideration.

In accordance with rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, please find attached an explanatory memorandum justifying the amendments (annex I) and a draft resolution on the amendments (annex II).

(Signed) **BAN Ki-moon**

Annex I**Explanatory memorandum on the award of postgraduate degrees by the United Nations University**

1. In accordance with the Charter of the United Nations University (UNU), the Secretary-General seeks the approval of the General Assembly to enable UNU to award master's degrees and doctorates, diplomas, certificates and other academic distinctions.

The rationale for the University's own postgraduate degree programmes

2. Today, universities are striving to become more global. UNU has the comparative advantage of being a global university within the framework of the United Nations. UNU has a mandate to create and share knowledge both within and outside the United Nations. It is now universally accepted that the most efficient transfer of knowledge is achieved through the participation of students in specialized master's degree and Ph.D. programmes involving a fully fledged master's thesis or Ph.D. dissertation.

3. By having their studies recognized and validated by a United Nations University degree, diploma or certificate, UNU postgraduate students will be better able (a) to help build and strengthen capacities, particularly in the developing countries; and (b) to contribute to the work of the United Nations system, development assistance agencies, government ministries and non-governmental organizations. This will be particularly important in relation to students from developing countries who face greater challenges when competing in the global market place.

Effect of UNU postgraduate programmes

4. The UNU Charter calls for UNU to have as a central objective of its research and training centres and programmes "the continuing growth of vigorous academic and scientific communities everywhere and particularly in the developing countries". UNU is mandated to "alleviate the intellectual isolation of persons in such communities in the developing countries which might otherwise become a reason for their moving to developed countries". UNU degree holders will be better placed to contribute to these important mandates.

5. UNU expects to initiate its own master's and Ph.D. programmes as from the latter part of 2010. The initial student population will be modest — from 20 to 40 master's/Ph.D. students. These students will undertake their studies within degree programmes situated at one of the 12 UNU high-level research and training centres and programmes dealing with issues of peace, security, environment, development and sustainability. The intake of students would gradually increase to approximately 250 annually. By 2020, UNU will have conferred master's and Ph.D. degrees on 2,000 students. Over the long term, their focused and practical educational experience at UNU will provide UNU students with a greater appreciation and understanding of the multilateral system, and enhanced opportunities to contribute from a variety of entry points to the work of the multilateral system.

How UNU postgraduate programmes will be implemented

6. UNU postgraduate programmes will be implemented at its institutes, which are located in both developed and developing countries. The UNU strategic plan 2009-2012 calls for all UNU institutes to be "twinned" — meaning having at least one component in a developing country and another in a developed country — by 2012. UNU master's degree and Ph.D. programmes being implemented at institutes co-located in a developing and a developed country will provide the University's postgraduate students with a unique and enriching experience during the period of their study with UNU.

7. UNU will implement its postgraduate degree programmes also in collaboration with universities located in close proximity to UNU institutes around the world. UNU programmes will be practically oriented, user-focused and of the highest quality and will offer opportunities for internship within a United Nations agency, development assistance agency or government ministry. They will build on the University's existing networks of scholars and academic institutions participating in UNU research programmes.

Financing UNU postgraduate degree programmes

8. UNU receives no subvention from the regular United Nations budget. As a voluntarily funded United Nations organization, the costs for UNU postgraduate degree programmes will be met from existing core resources as well as specific programme contributions from foundations, private sector entities and individuals. UNU will mobilize additional funding from outside sources to supplement the limited funding available for scholarships for students from developing countries. Funding would also be provided through tuition fees and other charges.

Conclusion

9. By endorsing the award of postgraduate degrees by UNU, the international community will help to reinforce the principle that education is a cornerstone for promoting "social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom".

Annex II**Draft resolution****Amendments to the Charter of the United Nations University**

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 2951 (XXVII) of 11 December 1972, by which it decided to establish the United Nations University, and 3081 (XXVIII) of 6 December 1973, by which it adopted the Charter of the United Nations University, and taking note of the resolutions adopted since then on the progress of the University,

Taking note of the resolution on the United Nations University adopted by the Executive Board of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization at its 182nd session, held in Paris in September 2009,

Taking note of the proposal adopted by the Council of the United Nations University at its fifty-fifth session in December 2008 for the United Nations University to build upon its existing joint graduate programmes and to develop and implement its own postgraduate degree programmes as a part of the United Nations University strategic plan 2009-2012,

Taking note of the proposal of the Secretary-General to amend the Charter of the United Nations University in accordance with article XII thereof, made after consultation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the Council of the United Nations University,

1. *Approves* the following amendments to the Charter of the United Nations University:

(a) A new paragraph 8 shall be added to article I, to read as follows:

“8. The University shall grant and confer master’s degrees and doctorates, diplomas, certificates and other academic distinctions under conditions laid down for that purpose in the statutes by the Council”;

(b) A new paragraph 2 bis shall be added to article IX, to read as follows:

“2 bis. The costs of the postgraduate degree programmes of the University as referred to in article I, paragraph 8, above may also be met from tuition fees and related charges”;

2. *Invites* the Council of the United Nations University to adopt such statutes as may be necessary to implement these amendments.